

ICE FISHING

Following are common techniques and tackle for popular ice-fishing species in northwest Montana.

Rainbow Trout – Generally fish just off the bottom in 5'–15' of water. Rainbows are eating lots of insects so use a small metal jig or glo-hook alone or 6"-8" under a flasher (Swedish Pimple). Red and chartreuse are popular colors. Small 1/8 oz. Or 1/4 oz. Marabou leadhead jigs (Fuzzee-grubs) or 2" white or black plastic (Mr. Twister) tail can work. Tip any of these with maggots or waxworms, shrimp, Powerbait or Gulp, corn (good but comes off easily) or salmon eggs. Jig every 20-30 seconds.

Yellow Perch – Generally feed on insects or small fish. Fish near bottom. Perch may be shallow but bigger ones are 30' or deeper. Fish a jig under a flasher or small leadhead jig with Marabou or 1½ Mr. Twister grub. Yellow and chartreuse are good colors. Bait with maggots, waxworms or perch eyeball or belly strip. Give small jigs or just make it "shiver".

Kokanee – Feed on tiny zooplankton. Fish 15'-30' down over deeper water. Use a glo-hook or jig under a flasher. Jig every few seconds with a short 6"-8" snap. You usually only get 1 bump so set hook immediately. Bait with maggots or waxworms. Red is preferred but sometimes chartreuse or orange will work.

Lake Trout – Lakers are fish eaters. Fish just off the bottom in 20'-150'. Use a jigging spoon or use a ¼ - ½ oz. Leadhead with a 3" white Mr. Twister. Tip with cut bait. Jig frequently with 2'-3' sweeps.

Northern Pike – Pike eat small fish. Fish just on the outside of weedlines in 10'-12' of water. First and last ice is the best. Fish smelt with a double hook on a quick-strike jig. Or jig a ¼ - ½ oz. leadhead with a 3" white Mr. Twister with cut bait.